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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, October 15, 1979)

The Senate met at 12 noon, on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by HON. HARRY F. BYRD, JR., a Senator from the State of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Edward L. R. Elson, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father-God, whose name is love, whose word is truth, whose spirit is goodness, in whose service is perfect freedom, and in knowledge of whom standeth eternal life, into Thy hands we commend our work this day.

"God be in our head and in our understanding;

God be in our eyes and in our looking;
God be in our mouth and in our speaking;

God be in our mind and in our thinking;

God be at our end—and at our departing."

In Thy holy name we pray. Amen.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. MAGNUSON).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, D.C., October 18, 1979.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable HARRY F. BYRD, JR., a Senator from the State of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

WARREN G. MAGNUSON,
President pro tempore.

Mr. HARRY F. BYRD, JR., thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the majority leader is recognized.

THE JOURNAL

Mr. ROBERT C. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Journal of the proceedings be approved to date.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR RESTORATION OF LEADERSHIP TIME

Mr. ROBERT C. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time of the two leaders be restored up to not to exceed 5 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? The Chair hears none. It is so ordered.

PROTECTING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. ROBERT C. BYRD. Mr. President, as Senate committees continue to work on the SALT II treaty and as the treaty and associated issues are discussed in the Senate, in the media, and among the public, it is important to be attentive to the need to protect security-sensitive information.

In order to consider all aspects of the treaty and fulfill its constitutional responsibility, it is necessary for the Senate and certain of its committees to take account of some highly classified information.

In this respect, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, of which I am an ex officio member, has a particular responsibility. The committee has made an in-depth study of the capabilities of the United States to monitor the SALT II treaty. I have been in the process of reviewing the committee's detailed and classified report on this subject, and I

have been impressed by the quality of the work and the care with which the committee and its staff treat this sensitive information.

The Intelligence Committee, under the leadership of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GOLDWATER), has rendered an important service to the Senate.

For the Senate to be able to make informed decisions on matters relating to our national security, and particularly on an issue as significant as the SALT II treaty, Senators need to have access to certain classified information. But in having access to this information, Senators and their staff assume the responsibility for avoiding any leaks or breaches of security.

The leaking of privileged information is not a new problem in Washington. Access to information is a source of power and, in this city, power can be used to pursue many different goals. Some individuals leak information for personal or career advancement; political figures may leak information in order to curry favor with the media; bureaucrats or staff may seek to promote their personal interests or those of the agencies they represent. Others may leak information because they believe that it is in the national interest to do so. And, of course, there are public officials who "selectively declassify" information to bolster their case for a particular program or to block programs that they oppose.

Some information leaks are harmless. Perhaps too much information is withheld from the public as sensitive when really it is not sensitive. But one leak creates an incentive for a counterleak. Soon the distinction between what is sensitive and what is not becomes blurred. If the process is unchecked, over time, there is little of value left to leak.

There is certain information that I believe all of us would agree is legitimately classified. I am referring to information on special defense programs and intelligence collection procedures and capabilities on which our national security depends.